

Cleaning the Corruption Out of Connecticut

STATE REPRESENTATIVE BOB GODFREY

Curbing Corruption

Connecticut's elected officials are honest and hard working. It is critical to good government that this continues to be the case in Connecticut and that our residents and businesses know they are getting a fair deal from the state. But recent events have shaken this trust. We must restore the confidence in our system. That's why I supported several bills that implement a stronger code of ethics and strengthen the penalties for violating that code.

These bills will:

- ◆ Increase the statute of limitations for filing ethics violations from 3 to 5 years and lengthening the time for the state to bring action to void a contract won through bid rigging from 90 to 180 days. (PA 04-38)
- ◆ Raise the maximum civil penalty for ethics violation from \$2000 to \$10,000. (PA 04-38)
- ◆ Make any person who commits two or more intentional ethics violations, or provides financial benefit of \$1,000 or more, guilty of a Class D felony and subject to up to 5 years in prison and/or up to a \$5000 fine. (PA 04-198)



Keeping Our State Officials Accountable

We need to establish an important balance between legislators, state officials and those doing business with the state. Frequently, contractors who apply for state work are friends and family members of state employees responsible for determining who gets the contracts. We must ensure this does not cause any undue influence when work is being done for Connecticut. Many new laws address these concerns:

- ◆ To prevent preferential treatment to certain contractors, any bidder who receives confidential or insider information regarding a project will be disqualified from bidding on it. Also, any "No Bid" Contract must be certified and documented that an emergency situation exists and then the State Properties Review Board will review and approve the contract within 30 days. (PA 04-141)
- ◆ There will be a two year look back period on any contract worth over \$500,000. Anybody associated with the contract will have to submit a signed affidavit declaring they have not given a gift to a state official that could be responsible for awarding the company the contract. (PA 04-245)
- ◆ Any legal defense fund will be subject to a \$1000 maximum donation and all contributors and officers of the fund must be disclosed. Lobbyists and state employees are prohibited from contributing. (PA 04-198)



Protecting Your Tax Dollars

The alleged corruption in the Rowland Administration has underscored the need to strengthen existing ethics laws. Last year the Governor's budget would have drastically **cut** funding for the ethics commission - **we rejected that!** We passed a couple of bills to ensure these funds would be protected and executive spending held accountable.



- ◆ In order to strengthen the Ethics Commission, we expanded its membership from seven to nine members to include two new members selected from citizen groups with interest in good government. These two members will be appointed by the House and Senate Majority Leaders. One of the Governor's three appointments must be selected from a citizen group as well. To protect the Ethics, Freedom of Information, and Elections Enforcement Commissions operating funds, their budgets will be submitted without change to the General Assembly and the Governor will be prohibited from reducing them. (PA 04-204)
- ◆ To increase oversight and encourage better management of state foundations, such as the Governor's Mansion Conservancy, a new law will require the State Auditors of Public Accounts to ensure the foundations are adhering to their purposes. It also mandates that these foundations submit annual reports to the Attorney General and the Government Administration and Elections Committee. (PA 04-37)

to express your opinions or concerns contact my office at 800-842-1902



Dear Neighbor,

This year's session of the General Assembly has been overshadowed by the scandals swirling around Governor Rowland. Connecticut has long been renown for the high level of ethical behavior and the integrity of it's officials, both elected and appointed, and the dedication of us all to the betterment of our state and its people. But Connecticut has become "Corrupt-icut;" that is so sad. I take no pleasure, political or otherwise, from these circumstances. Instead I mourn the loss of innocence.

As I write this, the House Select Committee of Inquiry is hearing testimony on the Governor's actions. By the time you get this, I expect I will be faced with the report of the Committee, and deciding whether or not the Governor should be impeached, which means he is suspended from his office, and will be tried by the Senate for his misconduct. It is not an easy decision, and I will apply all of my best judgment in determining the Governor's fate.

But I did not merely sit by as an observer. During the regular session, I joined many of my colleagues in championing a large number of bills dealing with ethics for public officials and with contracts with the state. This newsletter highlights the major successes.

As always, I value your feed back and opinion highly. don't hesitate to contact me on these issues or any others.

Sincerely,

Bob Godfrey
State Representative

Please Keep in Touch!!!

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**Strengthening
Ethics Laws**